



Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia, Inc.

Enhancing Higher Education, Theory and Scholarship

Proceedings of the

30th HERDSA Annual Conference [CD-ROM]

8-11 July 2007
Adelaide, Australia

Suggested format for citing papers:

Author (2007) Title of Paper, in *Enhancing Higher Education, Theory and Scholarship, Proceedings of the 30th HERDSA Annual Conference [CD-ROM]*, Adelaide, 8-11 July.

Published 2007 by the
Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia, Inc
PO Box 27, MILPERRA NSW 2214, Australia
www.herdsa.org.au

ISSN 1441 001X
ISBN 0 908557 72 8

Copyright © 2007 HERDSA and the authors. Apart from any fair dealing for the purposes of research or private study, criticism or review, as permitted under the Copyright, Designs and Patent Act, 2005, this publication may only be reproduced, stored or transmitted, in any form or by any means, with the prior permission in writing of the publishers, or in the case of reprographic reproduction in accordance with the terms and licenses issued by the copyright Licensing Agency. Enquiries concerning reproduction outside those terms should be sent to the publishers at the address above.

Some Similar International Approaches for Engaging Instructors in Scholarly Teaching and Conducting Research About Teaching

Milton Cox

Miami University, USA

Thomas Olsson

Lund University, Sweden

Marianne Poumay

University of Liège, Belgium

Greg Wentzell

Miami University, USA

This panel will provide information and discussion about approaches to engage and develop SoTL that are being used at some institutions in four countries: Belgium, Scotland, Sweden, and the United States. We will focus on the Formasup Degree at the University of Liège, the University Teacher category of academic staff at the University of Glasgow, the Pedagogical Academy at Lund University, and Faculty Learning Community Programs used at several universities in the US. The aspects of publication of SoTL will be included. We will note the role that an adapted learning community format can play in these approaches to scholarly academic development.

This panel will involve the audience in discussion about the feasibility of and approaches to developing SoTL using communities of practice that are being used at some institutions in Belgium, Scotland, Sweden, and the United States.

In 2002, the University of Liège launched a 60 credits degree in higher education pedagogy. This “Formasup” degree is coordinated by the LabSET research unit and aims at engaging faculty in learning about teaching. In 5 years, the degree has moved from a project-based approach to a real SoTL process. Each participant engages in deep reflection, transforms his/her teaching practice, conducts research in his/her class, and communicates the impact of the introduced innovations. This “Formasup” degree is one of the tools favouring the development of a real learning community in the institution, professionalizing faculty members and, in the long run, contributing to improving the learning experience of students.

In 2001, the University of Glasgow introduced a new category of academic staff, the University Teacher (UT). UTs, in addition to teaching and administrative duties, must engage in scholarship, defined within the University as “maintaining and developing knowledge within an individual's specialty and academic professional discipline.” This broad definition of scholarship has resulted in a range of interpretations by individuals and some anxiety, particularly in relation to probation/promotion procedures. In response the institution has developed a number of structures to foster and support UTs’ engagement with SoTL. New initiatives include a UT Learning Community and a new online journal, *Practice and Evidence of SoTL in Higher Education*. These initiatives aim to build an institution-wide sense of community around SoTL.

At the Faculty of Engineering, Lund University, the Breakthrough Project is a strategic initiative that attempts to change the teaching and learning paradigm from teaching-focused to learning-focused. In order to create the desired outcome, five initiatives were implemented: Pedagogical courses for teachers, pedagogical counseling by in-house counselors, a reward system for professionalism in teaching, a faculty-wide system for evaluation of teaching, and research in teaching and learning. The guiding principle was to build a Community of Practice where teachers engage in critical conversations about teaching and learning. If these conversations were supported by literature, they would drive change and development. So far we have seen increased interest and participation from teachers.

In the US, Miami University's Faculty Learning Communities Program, developed over 27 years, has increased production of SoTL, instructor retention, and collaboration across disciplines. During 1979-07, there have been 104 learning communities (FLCs) of 39 types, and 40% of Miami's current faculty have participated in cross-disciplinary FLCs of 8 to 12 members engaged in intensive, collaborative, year-long curricula focused on projects that promote development of SoTL. A federal grant has supported a fast track development of 12 different FLCs involving over 100 faculty at each of 5 adapting institutions. Participants present project results to the institution and at national conferences. Support for risk taking is offered by the community. Evidence confirms success.

These four approaches provide interesting comparisons and contrasts for engaging communities of practice.

Copyright © 2007 Milton Cox, Thomas Olsson, Marianne Poumay & Greg Wentzell. The authors assign to HERDSA and educational non-profit institutions a non-exclusive licence to use this document for personal use and in courses of instruction provided that the article is used in full and this copyright statement is reproduced. The authors also grant a non-exclusive licence to HERDSA to publish this document in full on the World Wide Web (prime sites and mirrors) on CD and in printed form within the HERDSA 2007 conference proceedings. Any other usage is prohibited without the express permission of the authors.